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The Examiner has indicated that the information disclosure statement fails to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(2) since a legible copy of each foreign cited patented document and non-patent literature was not included. In response thereto, the applicant points out that these references were part of the PCT Search Report: this application is the national stage of international application PCT/EP2005/001337. The Notice of Acceptance under 35 USC 371 indicated receipt of the international search report from WIPO by the US PTO. In accordance with MPEP 1893.03(g), the applicant requests that the Examiner retrieve the non-considered references from the international portion of the file and consider these references in the next office action through initialing the references on the information disclosure statement in the usual fashion.

Claims 27 through 33, 45, 46, 51 and 52 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Schaede' 280. Claims 34 through 44 and 47 through 50 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schaede' 280.

In response to these rejections, the applicant has amended claim 27 to further limit the sorting and stacking means by specifying that those means comprise a delivery nest defining steps onto which the blanks are disposed at different vertical and horizontal positions. Claim 43 has accordingly been cancelled and claim 44 slightly amended for consistency with amended claim 27. The applicant respectfully submits that claim 27 is distinguished from the prior art of record for the following reasons.

Claim 27, as amended, recites structure which is particularly advantageous in a device for the production of a deck of cards which are

printed together on a large web. The cards are then cut out of the web and must be assembled in such a fashion that a complete deck of cards is produced. Towards this end, the web is cut into rows and columns so that a plurality of cards are present in a row and a number of rows are present one behind the other. The cards of a given row are transferred by means of a distribution delivery wheel 30 to a nest. The nest or nests 31 have steps and the cards are deposited on individual steps of this stair-like structure. Moreover, the width of the steps is shorter than the length of the cards so that the cards project past both sides of the steps. After the cards are deposited onto the steps, they are pushed and fall in a downward direction onto the next lower step. This is effected by means of a comb (reference number 32 in the drawing). The comb 32 has a U-shape with the open portion of the "U" facing in the downward direction. The comb originally engages the highest most step (see figure). As the nest is moved in the direction of the arrow towards the right and past the comb, the individual cards abut against the legs of the comb and the upper most card on the upper most step falls onto the next lying step. These two cards are then deposited on the card on the next lower lying step. This process continues until a stack is formed which can be deposited on the conveyor belt 34. The stepped nest therefore facilitates sorting and stacking of the cards.

Schaede provides no motivation for this structure, since Schaede deposits the individual blanks in one common stack. This is the case since Schaede is concerned with stacking currency, which is printed on a sheet and cut out into individual bills. Each of the bills in the sheet is of the same denomination and the order in which they are deposited in a stack is therefore immaterial and no sorting procedure is necessary.

The applicant therefore submits that claim 27 as amended is sufficiently distinguished from the prior art of record to satisfy the conditions for

8

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patenting in the United States. The dependent claims inherit the limitations of the respective base claim or intermediate claim and are therefore also distinguished from that art. The applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and passage to issuance.

No new matter has been added in this amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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